

between intelligence and criminal investigations undermined the search for the 9/11 hijackers. Future investigations will uncover exactly what went wrong, and we will be held accountable for our actions.

I urge my colleagues to reject the Judiciary Committee substitute and vote to ensure our intelligence agents have the tools they need to confront the threat posed by al-Qaida and other foreign terrorist organizations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate the Senator from Arizona on his thoughtful comments regarding intelligence.

How much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I will take half that, and if the Chair will let me know when 2 minutes remain, I will be grateful.

REPUBLICANS READY TO WORK

Mr. ALEXANDER. I, too, welcome ROGER WICKER to the Senate. I have known him a long time. He has been a leader for the Tennessee Valley Authority. He is one of Congress's most knowledgeable Members, and he has been a leader in helping to put American history back in its rightful place in our classrooms so our children can grow up learning what it means to be an American. He was the lead sponsor in the House of Representatives on legislation that I introduced in the Senate that created summer academies for outstanding teachers and students of American history.

I would also like to congratulate Marty Paone on his service here. We all admire him and will miss him.

I thank the majority leader for his remarks at the beginning of the year, and I especially wanted to echo the remarks the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL of Kentucky, made. He pointed out that we have had a Presidential election in this country every 4 years since 1788. Senator MCCONNELL pointed that out, and he said we would not use this year's election as an excuse to put off the people's business for another day. In other words, it is a Presidential year, and some around town are writing and saying: Well, they will not get much done in Congress this year. We are saying on the Republican side of the aisle, and I hope it is being said on both sides of the aisle, that there is no excuse for Congress to take a year off, given the serious issues facing our country.

A number of politicians are campaigning for change, we have all heard. Republican Senators are ready to help, working with our colleagues, to give the Senate an opportunity to vote for real change. We wish to change the way Washington does business by going to work on big issues facing our country. And not just go to work on them but to get principled solutions this

year. And because this is the Senate, where it often takes 60 votes to get a meaningful result, that means we invite the Democrats to work with us in a bipartisan way to get those results.

Republicans didn't seek our offices to do bad things to Democrats. We are here to do good things for our country, and there is plenty to do. We see what is happening in the housing market, with oil prices, with rising health care costs. We know we need to move quickly with a bipartisan approach to help get the economy back on track. Our preference is to let businesses and people keep and spend more of their own money to boost the economy. We want to grow the economy, not the Government.

We know we need, as Senator KYL was saying, to intercept communications among terrorists to protect our country. We saw the Rockefeller-Bond bipartisan proposal passed by 13 to 2 in the Intelligence Committee. Our solution is to make sure companies aren't penalized for helping us protect ourselves, while at the same time securing individual rights. We want a strong national defense.

We see there are 40 million or so Americans uninsured, and we want to change that. We don't want to take a year off in dealing with health insurance. We want to start this year. As the Republican leader said, our goal is that every American have health insurance, starting with small business health insurance plans, moving on to reforming the Tax Code so Americans can afford to buy private insurance. There are a number of Democratic and Republican proposals on reaching the goal we have in helping every American to have health insurance. We can start this year.

There is no need to wait to deal with Medicaid and Medicare spending another year. We all know, at their present pace of growth, those two accounts will bankrupt our Government. It is irresponsible to wait. That is a bipartisan conclusion. There are a number of proposals from both sides of the aisle to begin to deal with that, from Senator GREGG and Senator CONRAD, to Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator DOMENICI and Senator VOINOVICH as well. We should get started. These are the principles of fiscal responsibility and limited Government.

Last year, we took some important steps to keep jobs from going overseas by growing more jobs at home. We see the problem of competition with China and India. We worked together to pass a bill—the American COMPETES Act—authorizing \$34 billion to keep our brainpower advantage. Now let us implement it. Senator HUTCHISON of Texas, Senators BINGAMAN and DOMENICI of New Mexico, and many others have worked hard on this. So let us implement more advanced placement courses for low-income students, a million and a half more; more highly trained scientists and engineers coming in to help grow jobs in the United

States; and 10,000 more math and science teachers. That we can do.

We know we have to be bipartisan to get a result. Some things are bipartisan, and I have mentioned many of them, but some things should be bipartisan that aren't. For example, the Federal Government is saying the Salvation Army can't require its employees to speak English on the job. Well, Americans, by 80 to 17 percent, believe employers should be able to require their employees to speak America's common language on the job. We have legislation to make that clear. It is bipartisan to some degree, but not as bipartisan as it ought to be. The principle is right there above the Senate Presiding Officer's desk. It says: One from many—"e pluribus unum."

Another challenge that should be more bipartisan, because most Americans see the wisdom of it, is addressing a shortage of medical care in rural America caused by lawsuit abuse. OB-GYN doctors are abandoning rural areas across America and mothers are driving too far for prenatal health care and to have their babies. We should work across party lines to change that. The solution we have offered is to stop runaway lawsuits that make doctors pay \$100,000 or more a year for malpractice insurance. That is why they leave the rural areas. This is the principle of equal opportunity.

There is plenty of work to do. Thirty years ago, I began my service as the Governor of Tennessee. I was a young Republican Governor and the State was very Democratic, thank you. So the media ran up to the big Democratic speaker of the house, Ned McWherter, and said: Mr. Speaker, what are you going to do with this new young Republican Governor? And to their surprise, the speaker said: I am going to help him. Because if he succeeds, our State succeeds. And that is the way we worked for 8 years.

Now, we are not naive about politics in Tennessee. We had, and have, our fights. We argued about our principles. If I had a better schools program, they had an even better schools program on the other side. But we kept our eye on the ball. In the end, we worked together. In the end, we got results. That is why we brought in the auto industry and created the best four-lane highway system and created chairs and centers of excellence at our universities that still exist, and we began to pay teachers more for teaching well.

I would like nothing more than to move that kind of cooperation from Tennessee to DC. I sense that from Democrats and Republicans all through this body. Of course, we will argue. We were elected because we have differences. This is a debating society. But we don't stop with our disagreements, we should finish with our results. So we are here to change the way Washington does business, as the Republican leader said, and I look forward to a constructive year of helping our country move ahead with a steady

stream of specific solutions to big problems that get results because they either are bipartisan or because they should be bipartisan.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would like to join my distinguished colleague from Tennessee who recently was elected to the leadership on this side of the aisle. His responsibility and mine is to help try to find a way to work together, not by sacrificing our principles but to try to find that common ground rather than what divides us.

But first let me also express my congratulations to our new colleague from Mississippi, Senator WICKER, who had a distinguished career in the House of Representatives and comes here. I know, with a lot of hopes and aspirations. I look forward to working with him as he represents his State and as I represent my State, the State of Texas, and as we all work together to represent the United States, hopefully, to provide for the aspirations and dreams of the American people to make it possible for them to live their dream. That is what the United States has always been; that is what it should remain.

I cannot help but reflect, returning from our holiday recess, I had somebody this morning in the cafeteria say: Welcome back from your vacation.

I said: Well, I prefer to call it the alternate work period because it was not entirely a vacation, although I did get some time off, as did my colleagues. But I trust that we all came back refreshed and rejuvenated and ready to take on the challenging work that lies ahead.

I have to say, if I heard it once, I heard it a thousand times as I traveled the State of Texas, people are frustrated with Washington, DC. They think Washington is broken. They do not hear about those occasions when we work together to pass legislation on a bipartisan basis. They hear the conflict and the divisiveness and the partisanship, and they do not like it. I had to tell them, each of my constituents when they mentioned that: Well, I do not like it very much either. I did not run for the Senate and I do not serve in a position of public trust to come up and pick fights.

Everybody knows in politics it is always possible to pick a fight, but it does not take any particular genius to do that. What we ought to be doing, and what it takes hard work to do, is trying to find common ground. There is plenty of common ground.

Senator ALEXANDER mentioned a number of tremendous bipartisan accomplishments—the America Competes Act. There have been a number of opportunities for us to work together in a bipartisan way. I am particularly proud of some legislation that Senator PAT LEAHY, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and I were the cosponsors of that the President signed into law in December, the first reform of

the Freedom of Information Act in perhaps as much as 25 years.

I think perhaps the best anecdote to public skepticism about Washington is greater transparency because I believe giving the public information about how their Government works is a way to empower them to hold elected officials and Government accountable. When things happen in secret, behind closed doors, that does not happen. So I am delighted there are plenty of opportunities for us to work together. I think we should embrace them, not run away from them or look for opportunities for us to pick fights and to feed that skepticism and really the sense that I think many people expressed to me that they feel as though Washington is increasingly irrelevant when it comes to dealing with the challenges that affect our lives.

The economy is one that has, of course, come roaring to the forefront as an issue on which we need to work together. I was pleased to hear Speaker PELOSI and Majority Leader REID say they wanted to work with the President to come up with a stimulus package that is timely, targeted, and temporary, something that would hopefully get the economy moving again as it has been for roughly the last 4 years, where we have seen an unbroken record of growth of the economy, increased number of jobs, some 9 million new jobs created.

Frankly, the way that happened is because we allowed the American taxpayer and small businesses to keep more of what they earned so they could invest it, they could spend it on the education for their children, they could do whatever they wanted to with it because it is theirs. Sometimes I think it is helpful to remind ourselves that the money that hard-working Americans earn is their money. It is not ours. It is not the Federal Government's money.

Sometimes I think when people are in Washington too long they begin to think of this as revenue pay-fors, ways to raise funds so that Government can grow bigger and spend people's money. Well, the American people understand there are some things they cannot do for themselves and Government has to do, such as the common defense, and they are willing to pay their taxes for efficient Government that delivers a particular result that Government only can provide.

But we ought not to use this stimulus package, the downturn in the economy, as a way to burden the American people with more taxes or find new ways to grow the size of the Federal Government. So I hope we can continue in a careful and judicious and thoughtful way to find common ground to work on a stimulus package that the President will sign and that will enjoy bipartisan support.

Now, there is a lot of skepticism, as I said, about Washington. Part of it is that the Government does not spend the tax dollars well, efficiently. I have to tell you there is good evidence of

that. There is a Web site associated with the Office of Management and Budget called expectmore.gov. I hope people will look at that.

What I discovered when I looked at it is that the Office of Management and Budget has reviewed 1,000 different Federal Government programs and found 22 percent of them either ineffective or the Office of Management and Budget cannot tell whether they are serving their intended purpose.

I am not sure which is worse. Either they are proven ineffective or else you cannot tell. Either way that is unacceptable and we need to find a way to deal with those wasteful Washington programs that need to be eliminated. I proposed a Federal sunset commission that is modeled after many of the States, such as my State, the State of Texas, where you have periodic reviews of those programs, and every once in a while the bureaucrats have to come in and justify the reason for the program's existence.

If circumstances have changed, the program is no longer needed, it can be eliminated or the budget, rather than securing an inflationary or cost-of-living increase in the size of that program each year without any real scrutiny or oversight, they start out with a zero-based budget and have to justify each dollar of that budget.

So I think a national sunset commission would help us eliminate more wasteful Washington spending. As I said, I am proud of the work that Senator LEAHY and I were able to do in a bipartisan way to reform the Freedom of Information Act to give people more information about their Government so they can hold Government and Government officials accountable. But I think there is more that we need to do. Recently, earlier this month, the Government launched a new Web site called www.usaspending.gov which allows Americans to search for Federal grants and contracts. I am going to propose legislation—I am eager to find colleagues on the other side of the aisle with whom I can work; I am sure there will be a number of them—to build on this Web site and allow taxpayers to see how the Government spends their tax dollars.

Now, I wish I could say I thought of this on my own, but the fact is, our comptroller in the State of Texas—may I inquire how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Five seconds.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am proud of the work that is being done by the State comptroller of Texas, Susan Combs, who has created a Web site wherethemoneygoes.gov. We need to use greater transparency and the accountability that goes with it to restore public confidence in how Government works. I look forward to working with our colleagues across the aisle and hope to find common ground, not to pick fights and find out where we differ but to find where we can move this country forward and solve some of the problems that confront us.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

SENATE GRIDLOCK AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Texas for speaking to a higher level of bipartisan cooperation in the Senate.

I sensed this in returning to Illinois and out on the campaign trail for my colleague, Senator OBAMA, that this is a sentiment widely shared. The American people understand we have a lot of challenges in this country, and they also understand it is easy to gridlock the Senate.

We had an all-time record number of filibusters initiated by the minority side of the aisle this last year. Sixty-two, I believe, was the final count, which eclipsed the 2-year record of 62 filibusters that had been prevailing. Certainly, we all know how to stop this train in the Senate. Minority rights are well respected by the Senate rules. And 15 minutes into our service in the Senate, you might hear the words "unanimous consent," and realize: Well, I will be darned. If I stand up and object, everything stops. And it is a fact.

Many Senators have used that for valid and invalid reasons, but it has been used a lot. We have one Senator on the other side of the aisle who takes pride in the fact that he has single-handedly stopped 150 pieces of legislation from even being debated and considered on the Senate floor. Many of them are not even controversial.

I hope we find a way around this. I want to respect every Senator's right, but if we truly want bipartisan cooperation, there are ways to achieve that. Using filibusters would not be that; objecting to bills just categorically would not be that approach either. But the one thing the American people certainly want us to do is to wake up and smell the coffee. And this morning, if you woke up and smelled the coffee, you also smelled something burning on Wall Street. What is burning is the Dow Jones Industrial Average. I do not know what it is at this moment, but it has been pretty awful starting this day, and it has been pretty awful for a long time.

It is interesting in American politics that when I first started running for Congress 25 years ago, the most important information for most voters was how many people were unemployed. And the monthly reports on unemployment really kind of fueled the campaign. If a President had more and more people out of work, there was a downturn in the economy and a downturn in that President's popularity. That was historically the standard. But over time we have stopped talking about the unemployment figures as much and tend to watch the stock market a lot more.

I think it has to do with many of us have our retirement savings tied up in

mutual funds and 401(k)s and IRAs. And so what happens is the stock market, at least in the back of our minds, is how I am doing. If the stock market is not doing well, my family is not doing well. So when the news came out yesterday that the bottom is falling out of international markets, and the Dow Jones opens with a tremendous slump of 400 points or more, people understand something is not right.

Last week, the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Paulson, called me and many leaders in the Senate and all but acknowledged that we need to do something, and do it in a hurry, if we are going to try to stop this economy from sliding into a recession.

Well, I agree with him completely. If you look at what we have done over the past 7 years, to many of us it is no surprise where we are today. There were many on the Republican side who argued for years and years, and still continue to argue, that tax cuts for the wealthiest people in America are the answer to everything.

If you have a surplus, you need a tax cut. If you have a deficit and need to stimulate the economy, you need a tax cut. You always need a tax cut. This kind of moralistic position of cutting taxes for the wealthiest people in America has been the basic doctrine of the Republicans in leadership for a long time.

They have had their way: President Bush's tax cuts, even though they have generated the highest deficits in our history; a greater dependence on foreign countries and foreign capital than ever before; the fact that the President made history, in an unusual way, in calling for more tax cuts in the midst of a war.

All of these things notwithstanding, our economy is slumping. There are a lot of reasons for that. One of the reasons, of course, is we have ignored the obvious. The strength of America is the strength of our families. And 40 percent of the families in America do not get close to the numbers that Republicans consider to be the right level for tax cuts.

Over 40 percent of the people in this Nation struggle in an effort to pay their bills and really live paycheck to paycheck.

It doesn't take much to derail that family train, whether it is the loss of a job or serious illness or some other catastrophe. These people have not been a priority of the Republican leadership in the Senate, the House, or the White House. Now comes the time when the economy is slumping, and all of a sudden this group that had been ignored for so long by Republicans in their tax-cutting priorities is, front and center, the centerpiece for saving the American economy. Welcome to real America, I say to my colleagues. These are the people who have been struggling for a long time and waiting to be rediscovered. They should be rediscovered.

I am troubled to learn—at least some speculation is out there—that this so-

called stimulus package is going to be limited so that it still doesn't help those in middle-income status or lower middle-income status, those working families who really do put up a struggle trying to get by. You don't have to spend much time out in the real world to meet them. They are not the legendary welfare kings and queens. These people get up and go to work every morning. They work hard. They don't make a lot of money. They struggle with no health insurance or health insurance that is virtually worthless. They struggle with trying to fill up a gas tank. It may be a beat-up old car, but it is their lifeline to get to work, to make a paycheck, to keep things going. They struggle with heating bills in a harsh and cold winter. They struggle with the dream of a college education for their kids and pray they will have a better life. These are the real-world struggles of real families who have been largely ignored in this economic debate in Washington.

When we get down to a discussion of an economic stimulus package, we ignore these families again at our peril. Any stimulus package that fails to acknowledge their need will fail to stimulate the economy. I don't know what the parameters will be. Targeted, temporary—all of these things make sense. But let's make sure we are doing the right thing for the right people.

Many people go to work every day making a minimum income. They struggle to get by. At the end of the day, they pay their taxes but don't have a Federal income tax liability. How can that be? They are paying their Social Security taxes, they are paying the Medicare requirements, all of the things all workers have to pay. But they don't make enough money because of the size of the family to be liable for Federal income tax.

Who are these people? I can give an example. We estimate that 40 percent of all households may not make enough to qualify for one of the proposed stimulus packages. Families of four making less than \$25,000 a year would get nothing. A family of four making \$25,000 a year, if it isn't given a refundable tax credit, will receive nothing by way of a stimulus check.

What does a family do if they are making \$25,000 a year and receives \$1,600, let's say, from the Federal Government? Well, if you are trying to get by on \$2,000 a month, \$1,600 from the Federal Government may be the answer to your prayers. You may finally be able to turn around and buy something you have put off for a long time. You may be able to catch up on some of your bills. Getting \$1,600 when you are making \$2,000 a month is a big deal.

Let's look at the other end of the equation. What if you are making \$20,000 a month and you get \$1,600 more? That is nice. I am sure there is something you can do. Will it change your lifestyle? Will it change the economy? It is not as likely.

That goes back to something I learned a long time ago from a Jesuit